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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their June 27 news coverage on the Central Bank's new measures to battle inflation and on the liberalization of financial and tourist exchanges across the Taiwan Strait. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" ran a banner headline on page three reading, "The United States Confirms That U.S. Naval Vessels Were Monitoring China's Military Exercises against Taiwan during the [Island's] March Presidential Election." The paper also devoted half of its page three to reporting and analysis of China's military exercise and the response measures of the United States.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a "Liberty Times" editorial cited recent remarks by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs James J. Shinn, respectively, and criticized the Ma Ying-jeou Administration for overlooking China's military threats against Taiwan. A separate "Liberty Times" commentary also questioned the Ma administration's call for a "diplomatic truce" and urged Ma to act more proactively to enlarge Taiwan's international space. An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" discussed the recent remarks by China's Taiwan Affairs Office Director Wang Yi that China will not accept Taiwan's formal participation in the World Health Organization. The article said Wang's remarks indicated that the Ma Administration's cross-strait policy has compromised Taiwan's sovereignty. End summary.

A) "The Ma Administration's Passionate Gesture [toward China] Is Greeted with Indifference; How Embarrassing for the [Taiwan] People"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] editorialized (6/27):

"... U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in a warning tone during a June 19 interview that 'even though the United States encourages developments in cross-strait relations, it has a relationship with Taiwan as well.' Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs James J. Shinn also pointed out in House testimony the other day that the United States continues to monitor the reinforcement of military strength of the People's Liberation Army's deployment on the other side of the Taiwan Strait.

"Even the United States, which is located far away on the east side of the Pacific Ocean, has been deeply worried about the Ma administration's paying little attention to Beijing's military threats and tilting toward China. Shouldn't the 23 million people [of Taiwan] be more alert [about the Ma Administration's policy]? Rice also appealed to China, saying that the United States wants to see Taiwan have 'real space' in the international community. It is thus clear that allowing a democratic Taiwan to survive in the international community with dignity is one of the U.S.'s policies as well. It is regrettable that the Ma Administration does not seem to care whether Taiwan has 'real space' in the international community. ...

"[China's Taiwan Affairs Office Director] Wang Yi's remark that [China] 'will try to establish a new framework' [for Taiwan to share information with other countries once avian flu breaks out in Taiwan] is apparently not 'real space' as indicated by Rice. Instead, it is meant to lock Taiwan tightly in the 'one China principle'. What is worrisome is that President Ma Ying-jeou, who has opened his heart to China by accepting the one-China consensus, probably will hastily accept the 'framework' that China has tailor-made for Taiwan, which China defines as a 'local government.'

President Ma has already said that, regarding Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization (WHO), 'there is no better name than the name of Chinese Taipei.' Since President Ma has personally fed a tiger with flesh, why does China need to be polite? ..."

B) "Diplomacy Has to be Pro-Active, Not Passive"

Dr. Lin Cheng-yi, research fellow at the Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, wrote in the "The Taipei Society Commentary" column of the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] (6/27):

"... Under the concept of 'diplomatic truce,' Taiwan must accept the 'one China' principle. The KMT's assertion of the 'one China with respective interpretations' and 'the 1992 consensus' in accordance with its philosophy indicates that the KMT has basically accepted the 'one China' principle. However, [Taiwan's] unconditional concession has made it more reliant on Beijing's goodwill and [subject to] compromise as to whether a 'diplomatic truce' will be feasible. ...

"If [the approach of] 'diplomatic truce,' which means accepting the 'one China' principle, is unable to help Taiwan become an observer

in the World Health Assembly, [it will mean that] what it can achieve is no better than [what was accomplished by] the former DPP government's provocative moves. Becoming an observer in the World Health Assembly is not only the basic goal of Taiwan's [policy of] 'diplomatic truce,' but also a test for Taiwan's bid to join the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The new government can talk about 'diplomatic truce.' However, how to make the European Union and other Western countries move from supporting Taiwan's 'meaningful participation'[in international activities] to becoming supportive of Taiwan's observer status in the WHO, as the United States and Japan have done, will be the most important challenge [for the Ma Administration]."

C) "PRC Gives Ma WHO Wake-Up Call"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (6/27):

"... [China's Taiwan Affairs Office Director] Wang [Yi]'s declaration proves that Beijing has not the slightest intention of allowing Taiwan to directly affiliate with the WHO regardless of our moniker and also manifests the assumption that the PRC is Taiwan's international representative and that any information-sharing between Taiwan and other countries on health threats must take place through Beijing's framework. Such an arrangement would be no different in principle than the secret May 2005 MOU between the PRC and the WHO that requires all contacts between the Geneva-based organization and Taiwan to be vetted in advance and carried out through the PRC Ministry of Health.

"This arrangement places Taiwan in an even more subordinate position than Hong Kong, which enjoys full WHO membership even though it is a PRC 'special administrative region.' In sum, Wang's 'wake-up call' sends the message that Ma's strategy of conceding our sovereignty will only sacrifice Taiwan for China's benefits and, if continued, will lead only to Taiwan's international suicide."

YOUNG